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POEMS BY DOROTHY
FRANCES GURNEY



POEMS

BY

DOROTHY FRANCES GURNEY

LONDON

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TO MY HUSBAND.

974358

A FEW OF THESE POEMS HAVE APPEARED IN
EITHER THE "ACADEMY," THE "CORNHILL
MAGAZINE," "COUNTRY LIFE," "ENGLISH
ILLUSTRATED MAGAZINE," THE "MORNING
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CONTENTS.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS :	PAGE
GOD'S GARDEN	1
GARDEN THOUGHTS	2
DREAMS IN VENICE	3
AN OLD MAID	4
TO INNOCENCE	5
IN ABSENCE	6
THE RETURN	7
A REVELATION	8
AD INFINITUM	9
SERVICE	10
DIVINE LOVE	11
SONGLESS	12
THE REVEILLE	13
TEARS	14
KIT'S ROOM	15
THE MAD SPINNER	16
THE THRESHOLD	17
THE HIGHER STOICISM	18
LITTLE FEET	19
FROM A ROMAN LOGGIA	20
VIOLETS FROM SHELLEY'S GRAVE	22
COMPENSATION	23

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS—*continued.*

	PAGE
AFTERWARDS	24
A MOMENT	25
A RED SUNSET	26
TO V. L.	27
DEVOTION	28
THE PORTRAIT	29
LOVE AND PITY	30
LOVE AND SORROW	31
THE LITTLE CRIPPLE	32
THE LARK'S CALL	33
FOR PEGGY'S BIRTHDAY	34
THE SHADOW	35
A SONG OF COURAGE	36
THE CHALLENGE	38
ELLAND	40
MOTTOES FOR SEVEN OLD WARMING-PANS	42
BONNY MARY	44
LOVE DEAD	45
LOVE BURIED	46
THE EXCUSE	48
THE CALENDAR	49

SONGS FOR MUSIC :

LITTLE THINGS	53
LUCK'S LULLABY	54
SONG OF THE VENETIAN SAILS	55
PURPOSE	56
THE DAISY CHAIN	57
UNION	58
LONGING FOR THE NORTH	59
WANDEREE	60

SONGS FOR MUSIC—*continued.*

PAGE

OVER THE MOOR TO TAVISTOCK	61
THE LITTLE MAIDS OF DEVON	62

SONNETS AND OTHER FORMS :

TO SLEEP	65
A GARDEN IN VENICE	66
AUTUMN	67
TO DEATH	68
BENEDICTUS	69
A RHYMED SESTINA	70
THREE ROUNDELS	72
TO G. G. W.	74
A BALLADE OF LOVERSLAND	76
MOON-SPELL	78

TRIOLETS :

SUB ROSA	81
APPLE-BLOSSOM	82
SHADOWS	83
IN THE WOODS	84
THE DIARY	85

TRANSLATIONS :

THE IDEAL	89
FROM THE FRENCH OF SULLY PRUDHOMME ..	90
DOWN HERE	91
THE GOLDEN LEAVES	92

SACRED POEMS :

THE WILDERNESS AND THE SOLITARY PLACE ..	95
" THE WIND BLOWETH "	96

SACRED POEMS—*continued.*

TO A SAINT	98
" AS LITTLE CHILDREN "	99
MAY DAY	100
THE ROBE	101
THE FIRST COMMUNION	102
MATER DOLOROSA	103
SANCTUARY	104
A DECISION	105

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

GOD'S GARDEN.

The Lord God planted a garden
In the first white days of the world,
And He set there an angel warden
In a garment of light enfurled.

So near to the peace of Heaven
The hawk might nest with the wren,
For there in the cool of the even
God walked with the first of men.

And I dream that these garden closes
With their glades and their sun-flecked sod
And their lilies and bowers of roses
Were laid by the hand of God.

The kiss of the sun for pardon,
The song of the birds for mirth,
One is nearer God's Heart in a garden
Than anywhere else on earth.

GARDEN THOUGHTS.

He that is a garden's friend
Groweth calm and wise,
And after death shall rise and tend
A plot in Paradise.

Pansies, pansies,
Warm as fireside fancies.
Such tender graces
In their baby-faces !
Thoughts from Mary's mother-lore
Of the blessed Babe she bore
And of His dear embraces.

Pure as virgin dream
The Mary-lilies gleam,
And the red-hearted rose
Glows and glows
Warmer and more brave since he
Is set against their purity.

DREAMS IN VENICE.

Last night as I lay on my bed and the night went
through,
Sleep shook a feather of dreams from his wings of
the moon
And it fell on my eyes, dear Heart, and I dreamed
of you—
Of you and the stars and the peace of the still
lagoon.

But a light wind lifted the feather, and lo ! my
dreams
Lay in a garden of roses set in the heart of noon,
And beyond it the beech-clad hills and the fields
and streams,
The rapture of thrush and merle and the cushat's
croon.

AN OLD MAID.

God's Acre marks another stone
Above its green and quiet slumber,
For, sweet Miss Patience, you are gone,
And Heaven another saint may number.

No longer down the village street
You pass and lighten half its burden ;
The children run in vain to greet
The smile they deemed so dear a guerdon.

Ah ! we shall miss you from your place,
Who held, perchance, your gentle spirit,
Your quaint old-fashioned words and face,
Too cheap to measure half their merit.

Your strength of soul, your depth of thought,
Ruled, guided, yet offended no man,
For all your power was schooled and brought
Within the gentlest scope of woman.

But Death unveils for us to see
The fulness of your ministration,
The silence of your charity
Your life, a simple, sweet oblation.

Scoffers may hold you up to mirth,
And cynics, if it please them, doubt you ;
But we who knew you best on earth
Felt that you carried Heaven about you.

TO INNOCENCE.

Could I hold, oh ! Love, your white and perfect
soul

Before the world has bound it with its fashion,
You and I, by quiet ways and sweet control,
Might learn life's meaning and love's fullest
passion.

Could pain of mine, even to my own heart's
breaking,

But spare your heart its revenue of tears,
The disillusionment, despair and aching
The world will bring you with the older years !

Yet, child, I dream one golden, far-off morrow,
We two shall stand in some diviner place,
Where youth eternal springs from human sorrow,
Perfect and white—one soul before God's Face.

IN ABSENCE.

Lend me but dreams,
Oh ! Sleep, thy visionary vassals to beguile
Absence that seems
Eternal ; give me my lost love a little while
And I will pay
Thy kindness with the sorrows of the lonely day

Waste not on those
Who know the waking joys of undivided love
Thy spirit-shows,
Love's bodiless pure presence and the bliss thereof ;
Keep them for one
Whose hopes may only rise at setting of the sun.

THE RETURN.

Oh ! perfect voice,
A long cold year unheard !
Hushing all common, harsher noise
Art thou returned with the joys
That warmed and stirred
The small throat of the happy, nesting bird ?

Dead memories
And all sad things that slept
Beneath the spell of alien skies,
At thy remembered harmonies
Rose up and swept
A wave of passion over heart and eyes.

A REVELATION.

Your arms are close around me
And on my lips your kiss—
Ah ! how could memory wound me
In such an hour as this ?

Yet even while you hold me
My thoughts are far away ;
Your love has only told me
My heart is dead to-day !

AD INFINITUM.

Although our lives are set
So far, do you forget
The day our friendship reached its highest goal ?
We tore the veil aside
Of false reserves and pride
And questioned with each other soul to soul.

Remember too how small
And impotent seemed all
The arts men use to heighten lover's worth !
For we had neared the shrine
And gazéd on Divine
And known a love beyond the love of Earth.

“ With time dies everything.”
So fools may write and sing,
Not we whose ears have heard the Eternal Voice ;
For ours the higher faith
Triumphs o'er change and death,
And Love immortal makes no second choice.

SERVICE.

Oh ! Love, I am too small to stand
Beside you as an equal soul,
And meet your gaze and touch your hand
And own a common path and goal.

But this at least is in my power,
To mark your passing day by day,
And here and there to plant a flower,
Or move perhaps a stone away.

DIVINE LOVE.

Fear not, dear Heart, to love too much,
Fear rather lest thou love too little !
True Love will bear thy boldest touch,
For only love of self is brittle.

Shrink not, dear Heart, from passion's flame,
But rather dread to be without it !
God's Spirit set thy soul aflame,
And who art thou that thou should'st doubt it ?

When spirit meets with spirit-love
Earth's meanest use is hallowed by it ;
Heaven's fire in falling from above
Needs no defence to deify it.

SONGLESS.

Green leaves are here,
 Sunlight and singing-birds ;
But where ? oh ! where
 Are the old wingéd words ?

Thought lies too deep,
 Joy is too high a thing ;
And now I weep
 What once I used to sing.

THE REVEILLÉ.

To-day when someone spoke your name
My heart was stung to sudden flame,
And every memory that awoke
Stabbed through it like a sabre stroke.

And yet the pain of wakened thought
Was worth its anguish, since it brought
The knowledge of how deep and true,
How deathless is my love for you.

TEARS.

Sometimes when I was near you
The tears would fill my eyes ;
To see and feel and hear you
Linked pain to ecstasies.

Now you are gone the stress is
That I must play my part
And smile while no one guesses
The tears that fill my heart.

KIT'S ROOM.

A small white room, whose casement shows
The city river where it flows,
All girt about with summer trees,
And quick with summer sun and breeze.

Here few might know the busy street,
With all its toiling, hurrying feet,
Lies hidden below—its noises come
Subdued to such a pleasant hum.

Ah ! in how good an hour did I
Sit here alone, so close the sky,
That all my thoughts grew still and clear,
And all my dreams drew Heaven near !

THE MAD SPINNER.

Humming wheel, oh ! humming wheel,
—Hush, my heart, for I must not feel—
The wind is driving in from the sea
And it drives the sound of a voice to me.

Flickering flame, flickering flame !
Did you start and whisper a name ?
I wait by the fire as I sit and spin
For the latch to lift and the Dawn come in.

Howl and crack ! howl and crack !
The waves are strewing the shore with wrack,
But they hold my life and the heart of me
Fast, fast, fast in the heart of the sea.

Whirling wool ! whirling wool !
White, white, white, and soft and cool !
God's fingers turn in the whistling sleet
And He spins and I spin for a winding sheet.

Spin, spin ! I am Fate who spins,
Spins till the Judgment Day begins
And the great sea, shrinking, gives up her dead
And my Love comes back to me out of her bed.

THE THRESHOLD.

Lift up the latch ! Set wide the door !
I bear my bride across the floor,
Past the great hearth, beneath the thatch,
On to the bed-place in the wall ;
Oh ! Love of mine, so white and small !
Lift up the latch !

Lift up the latch ! Set wide the door !
God's Body, though the shrine is poor,
Comes in the first grey morning watch.
Her mad, sweet eyes are staring wide ;
The dead babe stretches at her side—
Lift up the latch !

Lift up the latch ! Set wide the door !
Carry them out across the moor,
Out to the winds that howl and snatch,
To the lone churchyard by the sea,
Body and soul and life of me !
Lift up the latch !

THE HIGHER STOICISM.

If I must suffer pain, as needs I must
Since Death and dole so dog the things of dust,
Let me upgather all my strength and brace
My soul to meet it with a cheerful face.

And let no other creature's life be made
The darker for my passage through the shade,
But rather let the temper of my mind
Glow but the brighter for the gloom behind.

Let me, with Sorrow for a wholesome friend
By bitter means achieve the sweeter end,
As one who passing through the grave may rise
To prove his own and others' Paradise.

LITTLE FEET.

All down the valley
As I walk to-day
There are little footprints
Where the children play.

All down the valley
Of my heart's retreat
There are little shadows
Made by small, dead feet.

FROM A ROMAN LOGGIA.

I.

The moon was like a silver thread
Up in the paling sky—
A small faint moon as half afraid
To find herself so high.

I leaned upon the loggia wall—
My castles in the air !
I had not any fear at all,
They seemed so safe and fair.

To-night the little moon has grown
So large and clear and even,
Her light upon the sleeping town
Lies like a touch of Heaven.

Oh ! moon, above the loggia wall,
Your triumph mocks my pain,
For one by one the castles fall
Love may not build again.

II.

Give me a gift, oh ! love, my love,
The heart you have held so dear ?
“ I lie in my grave and I cannot move,
In my grave and I cannot hear.”

What if I come, oh ! love, my love
Down there to you and the dead ?
“ Death left my heart in the world above
And gave me a stone instead.”

VIOLETS FROM SHELLEY'S GRAVE.

Oh! cloistered sweetness, bending shy
Your dusky petals to the dew,
Love counts a dearer thing than you
These flowers, whose leaves are pale and dry

The spirit that to his dreaming gave
Its shadow of divine regrets
Still lingers in the violets
That lay upon his Roman grave.

COMPENSATION.

If I had never known you, I had had
Not so much pain, perchance,
As now makes sad
The days that miss your wonted touch and
glance.

I had not known with how swift blows and keen
Can Memory annoy,
In thoughts that lean
Too close and fondly on some buried joy.

And yet, belovéd, I had missed so much
Beyond what hinges on
Mere mortal touch,
That grief is gainer by comparison.

AFTERWARDS.

When, spirit-like, she moved among
The world's material, restless throng,
He met her beauty day by day,
And passed it by and went his way.

But when he came and saw her dead,
With the white flowers about her head,
He knew—left alien and alone—
His and the dead soul's life were one.

A MOMENT.

Was it your voice that I heard
Stealing down on the wind,
Or only a bird
Singing to one of its kind ?

“ Love ! Love ! Love ! ” so it fell
Soft ere the fancy fled.
For a moment's spell
I could forget you were dead !

A RED SUNSET.

Above the shadow of the western wood
I saw the heavens aglow with sudden light
As though swift blushing at her warmer mood
The dying day had kissed the colder night.

TO V. L.

The poets and the preachers say
That did we give our love to worth
Nor ever stoop to meaner clay
Life would bring only good to birth.

Fair doctrine for the chosen few
Who wear our worship as a crown !
But what to such as I, if you
Could never stoop a little down ?

DEVOTION.

There is no depth so low,
Love, where you were,
But that my heart would leave its rest and bow
To serve you there.

There is no place so high
That you might fill
But that my love would make it wings and fly
To serve you still.

THE PORTRAIT.

Every night beneath my pillow,
Love, I lay your pictured face,
And if I must wear the willow,
Still I keep this little grace.

Here I press again in seeming
Your dear lips and half forget
All my pain, and fall to dreaming—
Dreaming that you love me yet.

LOVE AND PITY.

Love knocked softly at the gate
Of your barred and guarded heart,
Strove he early, strove he late,
Tried in vain each tender art.

Then to aid his trouble sore
Swift his sister Pity came,
And the portal, closed before,
Opened to her holy name.

Sweet, you were your own undoer,
Being so to Pity kind—
As she crossed the threshold o'er
Love himself stole in behind !

LOVE AND SORROW.

Love met me late upon the way
Of Fancy's frail dominions,
A thousand radiances of day
Throbbed on his spirit-pinions.

He caught my heart—this lovely thing—
And held it with embraces,
“Come thou and sit apart and sing
With me in pleasant places!”

Alas! the truths we hold to-day
We learn anew to-morrow,
And I have found that child of play
Companioned close with sorrow.

THE LITTLE CRIPPLE.

The birds are singing on every tree,
Swinging, winging from tree to tree ;
But there's no more springtime for such as me.

The buds are blowing out on the lea,
Golden, purple and ivory ;
But there's no more growing or bloom for me.

My years have numbered but five times three,
And here I lie like a fallen tree,
And the young Spring passes and pities me.

For the Hand of God stayed my growth for me,
The Angel Pain took my youth from me,
And the long, long years hold no sooth for me.

The birds are singing on every tree,
The buds are blowing out on the lea ;
But there's no more springtime for such as me !

THE LARK'S CALL.

My little maid, with eyes of blue,
The larks are calling out to you :
“ Come up ! come up ! you child of spring,
Into the dancing air, and sing
For very joy of everything.
Oh ! child, you are so wild and big !
We saw you break a budding twig ;
And, as you play, beneath your tread
The pretty daisies all are dead.
We tremble lest your careless feet
Should crush the eggs that, close and sweet,
We hid among the meadow grass,
But little dreaming you would pass.
You would be so much safer here,
A-singing in our skyey sphere ! ”

My little maid, with eyes of blue,
The larks are calling out to you :
“ Come up ! come up ! you human thing,
For, oh ! the joy upon the wing,
Here, where the air is rarely fine,
And sunshine, like a golden wine,
Turns and turns within the brain,
Till one must sing and sing again.
Come up ! come up ! you human thing ;
Take but your skirts in hand, and spring ;
And you will soon be with us here,
A-singing in our skyey sphere ! ”

FOR PEGGY'S BIRTHDAY.

Peggy, two years old to-day,
Must I set your praises forth?
Fashion you a birthday lay,
I, whose songs are little worth?

Breath of freshest mountain air,
Scent of orchard blossom fine
Haunt my memory with the fair,
Glowing face you turn to mine.

Just so deep and clear and still
Are your lovely, innocent eyes
As when winds have worked their will
And no cloud is in the skies.

The hair upon your temples grows
Like the curling woodbine shoot
And the colour of it shows
As sunlight on the chestnut's fruit.

But the swiftness of your smiles
And their brightness who shall trace?
And your hundred dainty wiles
Who shall sing their baby grace?

Peggy, two years old to-day,
'Tis no easy thing you ask.
For a fitting birthday lay
Love himself should take the task.

THE SHADOW.

Beautiful, dainty thing,
With your garments of summer blue
And your eyes that dance and your gems that
glance,
How the sunshine smiles on you !

What is that crouched by the wall,
Haggard and lean and wan,
Whose ancient rags on the ashen flags
You could almost touch with your fan ?

Beautiful, dainty thing,
With your braveries all astir,
Vibrantly bright in the glowing light,
Your shadow falls on her.

A SONG OF COURAGE.

“ Sing me a song ! ” Life stood and cried of me,
“ A song not all made out of tears and sighs,
Of barren woods and wet and windy skies ;
Sing me a song of human bravery !

“ Though skies are grey, yet somewhere shines
the blue,
The naked trees know green and tender leaf,
High hope and promise triumph over grief,
And still the false is worsted by the true.

“ Because the stage whereon they play is small,
And trivial seems the daily sacrifice,
Your thoughts disdain the world's nobilities
Who never think upon themselves at all.

“ Sing, therefore, of the kindness of the poor,
More keen than yours, who know not hunger's
pain ;
Sing of the nameless heroes of the plain
Who fall unheralded at Glory's door !

“ Sing, too, their humbler brethren of the mine
Who grope in darkness for your warmth and glee ;
The countless toilers on the uncertain sea
Who hazard life that half a world may dine !

“ For I am sick,” cried Life, “ of this your air
Of dainty melancholy. Make for me
A sterner song of human bravery,
Of human patience trampling down despair ! ”

THE CHALLENGE.

Oh ! my England, oh ! my England, 'mid the
nations set on high
For the pointing and the question and the gaze
of every eye,
In what fashion dost thou now fulfil thine ancient
destiny ?

Oh ! my England, oh ! my England, dare we
glory in thy name,
When beneath the splendid surface lies the smirch
and soil of shame,
And for bread and games, as once in Rome, the
people sell thy fame ?

Oh ! my England, oh ! my England, we the
offspring of thy sod,
Do we tread the strenuous pathway that our
great forefathers trod
Who have fought and made and held thee by the
grace and power of God ?

Oh ! my England, oh ! my England, was their
labour all in vain,
Those old saints of thews and sinews of a high
heroic strain,
Who had noble thoughts and lived them with no
selfish greed of gain ?

Oh ! my England, oh ! my England, think ! by
moor and dale and fen
How they sleep, thy white-souled daughters and
thy sons, all valiant men !
And rouse thine ancient fires and bear such
children now as then !

ELLAND.

Up there in Elland
In the good old days,
There were silver gleams of falling streams
And lovely woodland ways.

Up there in Elland
Down the sunny glen,
They played their plays and fought their frays,
The little fairy men.

Up there in Elland
A lass could meet her love,
And sit and sigh to a high clear sky,
And hear the cushat dove.

Up there in Elland,
Oh! it's changed to-day!
For the devil's work of grime and murk
Has driven the elves away.

Up there in Elland
They've felled the bonny trees,
And poisoned all, river and fall,
Where the lovers took their ease.

Up there in Elland
The sun is never clear,
For the leaden clouds that rise like shrouds
From end to end o' the year.

Up there in Elland
A man that's living now,
A weary slave from cot to grave,
Toils in the sweat of his brow.

Up there in Elland,
Oh ! for heaven again !
For a flower that blows and a stream that flows
Clean through the sunny plain !

MOTTOES FOR SEVEN OLD
WARMING-PANS.

(In the possession of the Rev. R. Hanbury-Miers.)

I.

With this pan from toe to head
Doe I warm my guesste's bed.
With good loving in my hearte
Doe I bid him come and part.

II.

As doth this pan hot coals inurn,
So in my heart Love's fires doe burn.

III.

Let either sheet
Be fine and sweet,
The pillow deep,
Inviting sleep.
From top to toe
For heartsome glow,
Pass me, sweet Nan,
This warming-pan.

IV.

Let thy love to fellow-man
Glow as doth this warming-pan.

V.

Life's a bed that's chill
With every kind of ill.
Love's the warming-pan
Warming it to man.

VI.

May thy face, like this pan's dial,
Shine through every daily trial.

VII.

This warming-pan that looks so cold
The fire's hottest ash doth hold.
So deepest love doth often hide
Beneath a face of quiet pride.

BONNY MARY.

Oh ! you may bid the summer wind
Give strict account for each vagary,
Yet never think with laws to bind
The wandering steps of Bonny Mary !

And you may pierce the sunset clouds
That float in golden veils and airy,
But not the mystery that enshrouds
The changeful schemes of Bonny Mary !

And you may rob the boundless main
Of all its hidden treasures chary,
But you shall seek to know in vain
The secret thoughts of Bonny Mary !

And yet before her feet we fall
Spell-bound, both foolish ones and wary
And think it bliss to be in thrall
To such a queen as Bonny Mary !

LOVE DEAD.

Sweet, no longer weep nor wail,
Nor change so quick from red to pale
Since love is dead that was your bale.

For to have you glad and free
I have slain fair Love in me,
Knowing not how hard 'twould be.

Now to liberty annexed
You shall be no longer vexed
Nor with Love's wild ways perplexed.

But since you have given your fiat,
Should you pine in too much quiet
For Love's old delicious riot ;

All in vain your best endeavour
To bind again the tie you sever—
Love once dead is dead for ever !

LOVE BURIED.

I met my love upon the way—

Oh ! but the weather was wet and grey !

“ And where is our love this many a day ? ”

“ Do you not know, sweetheart,” she said.

“ This love of ours, he is cold and dead ?

And we two here must dig him a bed.

“ A bed where he may rest full fain,

And never trouble our hearts again,

That, seeking pleasure, have chanced on pain.”

I looked my sweetheart in the face—

Oh ! but the rain beat down apace !

“ And where shall we find him a burying-place ? ”

“ There is no room in my heart,” she said,

“ No room for a love that is cold and dead,

With the new love reigning there in his stead.”

“ Sweetheart ! then I will give him rest,

I will dig him a grave in my empty breast,

That never may house a fairer guest.”

We dug it deep, my dear and I—

Oh ! but the wind swept down the sky !

And we left him with never a tear or a sigh.

He cannot rise from a grave so deep,
But sometimes I think I can hear him weep,
And stir a little down there in his sleep.

THE EXCUSE.

If when I stole that kiss
 I did amiss,
I still can find good reason
 For the love-treason ;
For, sweet, believe me,
'Tis you that should be chid
 For what I did,
Since 'twas your glances kind
 That served to blind
And so deceive me !

But if you needs must tame
 My passion's flame,
Tie up each curling tress
 That courts caress !
No more discover
The light of love that lies
 Within your eyes !
Such beauties to resist
 Would take, I wist,
A colder lover !

THE CALENDAR.

When Love the flight of Time records
 He measures it in blisses,
And counts his days in honey words
 And all his months in kisses.

Then, Love ! when I am with my dear
 Bid Time awhile delay,
And count me out thy longest year
 Into his single day !

SONGS FOR MUSIC.

LITTLE THINGS.

No one sings the little songs
Now that you are dead ;
The little songs you used to croon
Over a cradled head.

No one does the little things
With your gentle grace,
The little things that used to make
The world a pleasant place.

No one says the little name
Only we two knew !
Do you use it still, dear heart,
Up in Heaven's blue ?

LUCK'S LULLABY.

Little feet, little feet,
 Stumbling as you play,
Shall I tell you what you'll meet
 On the Wander-way ?
Then lie you still and shut your eyes,
And Luck will sing you lullabies.
 Lo, la, lulla !

Little dear, pretty dear,
 Ugly things will hide
As you pass along, for fear
 Of your maiden pride.
Then lie you still and shut your eyes,
And Luck will sing you lullabies.
 Lo, la, lulla !

And there will come a golden child
 And lead you by the hand,
All across a pleasant wild
 Into Fairy-land.
So lie you still and shut your eyes,
And Luck will sing you lullabies.
 Lo, la, lulla !

SONG OF THE VENETIAN SAILS.

Brown sails for toiling
For the city's needs,
For the sweat and soiling
Honest labour breeds.

Golden sails for moving
Over a golden sea
To a golden loving
Just of you and me.

White sails for drifting
Under the starry skies,
To watch the angels lifting
The veil of Paradise.

PURPOSE.

My heart was like a swallow,
Restless and light of wing,
That went with every winter
And came with every spring.

My life was like an echo
That, answering every call,
Held each a little moment,
Only to lose them all.

But you have tamed the swallow
That nevermore may rove,
And you have tuned the echo
To one long note of love !

THE DAISY CHAIN.

Bring me no more
Your roses red—
Those globes of fire
Wherein desire
Lurks to restore
A passion dead !
Lest sight and scent shall wake again
The memory of an ancient pain.

But prithee get
Me daisies white,
That I may so
Forget my woe,
And dream me yet
A little sprite,
Who binds her joys with daisy chain,
Nor ever lets them loose again !

UNION.

You take that road
And I take this road
 Across Life's plain ;
But whichever road we go
Curves inward to a bow
 And we meet again.

You sing that song
And I sing this song
 Of love or pain ;
But whichever song we sing
Rounds to a perfect ring
 In the same refrain.

You love that way
And I love this way
 For loss or gain ;
But our loves, or weak or strong,
Through the ages all along,
 In God's Heart have lain.

LONGING FOR THE NORTH.

Oh ! I may walk in Southern ways
By the lovely river-land,
And watch the soft wind as it plays
With the corn on either hand ;
By honeysuckle and wild rose lane,
And flowery, fairy dells,
But my heart goes out with a kind of pain
For a sight of the Northern Fells.

Oh ! I may live where the Western sky
Lifts over the open moor,
And watch the great ships steaming by
Through the stately harbour door ;
But soft is the air of moor and sea
Breathing of slumber spells,
And wild, wild, wild is the heart of me
For the cold of the Northern Fells.

Oh ! to stand where the great hills close
Round the tarn at even-fall,
While the brown, brown bracken grows to a rose
And the wild-fowl wheel and call !
And through the gloom and the glamouring
You can hear the light sheep-bells,
Ah ! never the South and the West for me
With my heart on the Northern Fells.

WANDEREE.

King Wanderee has come over the sea
And nobody knows what he said to me,
He came in the trade-wind down from the hill,
He crept in my bones and I can't keep still ;
For there's never a harbour, a maid or a wife
Can keep a man from the old sea life,
When Wanderee comes over the sea
We sailors up and we goes with he !

King Wanderee has come over the sea
And he whispered low in the heart of me,
And I saw the fair wind blow to the West
And a great ship sliding from crest to crest ;
And who am I to be stayed by fears
Or turned about by a maiden's tears ?
When Wanderee comes over the sea
It's kiss your lass and along with he !

King Wanderee has come over the sea
And he calls my mates by two and by three,
Calls and calls till he stirreth the blood
And a man wakes up to his hardihood.
Then it's good-bye, wife, and it's good-bye, maid,
Good-bye to port and we'll not be stayed ;
For Wanderee has come over the sea
And we sailors all are away with he !

OVER THE MOOR TO TAVISTOCK.

It's May in the West of England now,
And the tasselled larch is green
With a living green against the show
Of the dark firs set between ;
And the gorse bush burns, a flaming thing
Above the boulders grey,
And you hear the lark's song shivering
All down the skies of May,
And it's nothing but sand, sand, sand,
In this weary and foreign land,
And oh ! to be walking by wood and rock
Over the moor to Tavistock !

It's May in the land of stream and tor
And my girl looking out,
Shading her eyes, at the farmstead door,
From her bright hair blown about ;
Watching the old man climb the hill,
While the mother stands behind
With a face that the peace of God keeps still,
And the love of God makes kind.
And here in the changeless sand
Of this dreary foreign land
I dream I'm walking by wood and rock
Over the moor to Tavistock !

THE LITTLE MAIDS OF DEVON.

Oh ! the little maids of Devon
They've a rose in either cheek
And their eyes like bits of heaven
Meet your own with glances meek,
But within them there are little imps
That play at hide and seek.

Oh ! the little maids of Devon
They have skins of milk and cream
Just as pure and clear and even
As a pool on Dartmoor Stream,
But who looks at them is holden
With the magic of a dream.

Oh ! the little maids of Devon
They have honey-coloured hair
Where the sun has worked like leaven
Turning russet tones to fair,
And they hold you by the strands of it
And drive you to despair.

Oh ! the little maids of Devon
They have voices like a dove
And Jacob's years of seven
One would serve to have their love,
But their hearts are things of mystery
A man may never prove.

SONNETS AND OTHER FORMS.



TO SLEEP.

SONNET.

There is a land where none are callèd kings,
Where high and low and rich and poor are one,
Naked and equal in the oblivion
That falls upon the face of waking things ;
Where thought may rest her overwearied wings
And fancy all his wildest plumage don
Clipped by no limit or comparison,
And where the voice of Hope eternal sings.

Ah ! lovely land of Sleep, whose borders glad
I trod at will till Love had driven me hence
And cursed my days and nights with blind unrest !
In vain I beat upon thy portals blest
That bar me from the joys which once I had
And make a mockery of my impotence !

A GARDEN IN VENICE.

SONNET.

There is a garden in a vineyard set
Beneath the spell of Adriatic skies,
A lovely place of dreams and ecstasies,
Of colour tangled in a verdant net,
The shimmer of the low lagoon whose fret
Washes the garden's length and rose that vies
With rose, pomegranate and tall flowers that rise
Above their fellows in one glory met.
And there I think in the still summer night,
When all the world is sleeping save the moon
And the blest nightingale who shuns the noon,
The closed flowers open out of sheer delight
And the white lilies bow their slender stalks,
For through them, 'neath the vines, Madonna
walks.

AUTUMN.

SONNET.

The wind-swept sky is very clear and still ;
There is a gleam scarce earthly in the blue
That melts in delicate sunlight out of view
Where, fold on fold, hill rises over hill.

Autumn has touched the summer with her chill,
Ethereal hand, and shivered through and through
The dull green woodlands, till in every hue,
From gold to red, they answer to the thrill.

Even so the autumn closes in my life
Towards its wintry end, and I feel Death—
Dear and familiar Angel—lay his hand
Gently on mine, and draw me from the strife
Into a haven where, with quiet breath
And a great hope, I wait his last command.

TO DEATH.

SONNET.

I, who have lived as if the blessed light
Were such a thing as needs must last alway,
And so have left the thoughts I had to say
Until my mood and they were tuned aright,
Yet sometimes feel a pang of strange affright
Lest, all unheralded by twilight grey
Or slow, sweet fading of the pleasant day,
Death should drop suddenly the veil of night.

Oh! Death, bethink thee that my years are
 young,
And in my soul is still the breath of Spring,
That the fair speech which trembles on my tongue
Must die with me, a fruitless, still-born thing;
Think of the many songs as yet unsung,
And all a world of wonder still to sing!

Florence.

Nov. 29, 1885.

BENEDICTUS.

SONNET.

A February morning, whose first flush
Lights the few faithful peasants kneeling by
And the lone figure in the Sanctuary
Blessing the lifted Bread and Wine. A hush
Falls for a moment, then a sudden rush
Of delicate bird voices, cry on cry.
The sparrow's, linnet's, the lark's ecstasy,
The blackbird's croon, the sobbing of the thrush.

Here is no mighty organ choiring fair,
To hail God's coming, bid the heart rejoice,
A poor small church, the priest's low reverent
voice,
But a faint murmur in the heart of prayer,
Yet, lest God miss His music to the words,
Spring wakes the Benedictus of the Birds.

A RHYMED SESTINA.

If Love would bring me where my lady is—
We having been so great a while apart—
All the sweet songs and speech I made of this
My longing for her great within my heart,
Being so swiftly to her presence come
Would die for joy and leave me cold and dumb.

And I should envy even the ground, the dumb
Green ground she treads on and the grass that is
So close about her feet, the winds that come
And stir her hair this way and that apart,
But most of all the myrtle at her heart—
Love were well paid with less a prize than this!

Oh! nights, long wakeful nights, fair even as this
I dream in—all the world asleep and dumb—
That knew our fancied meeting heart to heart!
Chill dawns that told how cold the waking is
To find our loves are still as far apart
And days of weary waiting yet to come!

I lie and watch the moonlight go and come,
Pale shadow of a purer world than this,
And hear where down the ilex grove apart
Sings Philomel who all the day was dumb,
With so divine a note that sure it is
The rise and falling of Love's very heart.

Oh ! Love, the heart of night is in my heart
And with the moon strange moonlit fancies come
And I forget that any world there is,
Or any other singing bird but this ;
So sweet it is for lips that erst were dumb
To break in song the prison bonds apart !

Ah ! now it is not hard to sit apart
And sing Love's praises. Yet within my heart
There grows a doubt the day may find me dumb
When with my fairest songs I fain would come
Before her face, who have no way but this
To show how very sweet her service is.

Gentle my master ! speak, that there may come
A spirit of song to dwell within my heart
When thou dost bring me where my lady is !

Rome.

Feb. 25, 1886.

THREE ROUNDELS.

I.

My lips refuse to take farewell of bliss,
Sweet Love, so sweet and cold I can but choose
To leave thee, only parting word and kiss

My lips refuse.

Fancy wears livery of a thousand hues !
So love in idleness may come to this
And I must bring the thought to common use.

That ever—save in memory—I shall miss
Thy short-lived tendernesses, ever lose
All that has taught how dear a thing it is

My lips refuse !

II.

Other lips than yours intreat
Those I vowed in vanished hours
Never Fate should force to greet
Other lips than yours.

Memory dulls perchance and sours
What was once so strangely sweet
Being ours and only ours ?

All the life and heart and heat,
All the soul that Love outpours
Die upon the lips that meet
Other lips than yours.

III.

Love, though I die and dying lave
My soul in Lethe endlessly,
Losing all else I still would save—
Love, though I die—

Thy living presence, touch and sigh,
All that the golden moments gave
To vanished hours of ecstasy.

Then make thou great and wide my grave,
So wide we two therein may lie ;
For sense of thee my soul will crave
Love, though I die !

To G. G. W.

BALLADE.

So as of old the wandering Greek
 A new Odysseus from the sea
You come, and I shall hear you speak
 Of our enchantress, Italy,
 Of breezes blown from Araby,
Scents borne upon an Indian gale ;
 But you will never paint for me
A fairer place than Rydal Vale :

You've climbed the Himalayan peak
 And sailed perchance by Tahiti,
You've watched the golden morning break
 O'er lands that rival Arcady ;
 From Oregon to Albany
By many a soft New England dale
You've wandered, yet you scarce could see
 A fairer place than Rydal Vale.

Oh ! stream of winding curve and creek
 Whose waters dance in harmony
And skirt with many a fret and freak
 The meadow of the rowan-tree,
 Where in the summer evenings we
Have watched the flying ball or bail—
 Say ! can you find to wander free
A fairer place than Rydal Vale ?

ENVOI.

Friend, 'tis a question of degree.

For me your larger wonders pale :

I cannot hold in memory

A fairer place than Rydal Vale.

July, 1890.

A BALLADE OF LOVERSLAND.

In Loversland the skies are blue,
Or barred with rosy clouds between,
The flowers are fairer far of hue
Than ever flowers of earth are seen,
And all day long through meadows green,
Beside the river, hand in hand,
Walk youths and maids of gentle mien
In Loversland, in Loversland.

And some there are that lightly strew
With roses all the way serene,
And some that pleasant odours brew
From elderflower and eglantine,
And others still in dell and dene,
With brows the kindly sun has tanned,
Who sow the seed and harvest glean
In Loversland, in Loversland.

Dan Cupid schools a merry crew
Beneath the beeches' leafy screen,
And bids each ardent swain construe
The glances from his mistress' eyn ;
No harder task than this, I ween,
Was ever there for scholar planned—
To sing and serve his fancy's queen
In Loversland, in Loversland.

ENVOI.

Ah! can it be that we have been,
Sweetheart, on that enchanted strand?
That we too know what life may mean
In Loversland, in Loversland?

MOON-SPELL.

ROUNDEL.

Slow mounts the moon where yonder hills are met ;
 While the spent noon
Fades in pale lines of flame to westward yet,
 Slow mounts the moon.

Faint gusts of wind among the rushes croon ;
 The bay is set,
A silver cup where Love may drink and swoon.
Forgetting all the toil and vain regret,
 The vanished boon,
Since overhead—Sleep's mystic amulet—
 Slow mounts the moon.

TRIOLETS.

SUB ROSA.

Love hid in the rose
 My love gathered for me ;
And by all the sweet throes
Love hid in the rose
To peril repose,
 I fear lest you see
Love, hid in the rose
 My love gathered for me !

APPLE-BLOSSOM.

Clear against the rainy sky,
Pink and white of apple bloom
Spreads its clusters low and high.
Clear against the rainy sky
Of my tears can Love descry
Your lost face and through the gloom,
Clear against the rainy sky,
Pink and white of apple bloom.

SHADOWS.

The shadows lie
Across the mere ;
Across the sky
The shadows lie,
And Love and I
Are drifting where
The shadows lie
Across the mere.

IN THE WOODS.

Down the woods at Godalming
All the ways are green ;
Thrush and tit and blackbird sing
Down the woods at Godalming,
For where Love is wandering
And where Spring has been,
Down the woods at Godalming
All the ways are green.

THE DIARY.

Within these leaves I keep,
 For memory's sake,
Tokens that fade and sleep
Within these leaves. I keep
Thoughts here too light and deep,
And laughter and heartache
Within these leaves I keep,
 For memory's sake.

TRANSLATIONS.

THE IDEAL.

The moon is large, the heaven fair
And full of stars, the earth is spent ;
All the world's soul is in the air :
Of one great star magnificent

I dream, of one I may not see
And yet whose light must, travelling, gauge
The eternal space and come to me
The glory of another age.

When at the last it shines above,
Fairest and farthest star in space,
Then let it know it had my love,
Oh ! latest of the human race.

—*From the French of Sully Prudhomme.*

FROM THE FRENCH OF SULLY
PRUDHOMME.

When she your best belovèd dies
Farewells for you are swift and sore,
They bear her hence with closèd eyes
And she is gone for evermore.

But I behold my best beloved—
Who smiles and is no more for me—
Even as a shade, but livelier moved,
More present than a memory.

I lose her thus my whole life through
In one farewell that never dies—
Oh! Death! how ill they buried you
Who have forgot to close your eyes.

DOWN HERE.

Down here fast fade the lilac bowers,
The song of birds is short, nor stays—
I dream of summers that are ours
 Always.

Down here Love's lips, like fragile flowers,
Scarce leave a memory of their grace—
I dream of kisses that are ours
 Always.

Down here men mourn lost friendship's hours,
Or the dead loves of younger days—
I dream of lovers who are ours
 Always.

—*From the French of Sully Prudhomme.*

THE GOLDEN LEAVES.

The leaves of gold, the leaves of death,
All the summer leaves are falling
Into the wind's imperious breath,
Into the wind that summoneth
With an eternal calling, calling.

Across the shivering mist of rain,
Towards the scent of winter's track
They wing their flight, a scattered train,
While the frail branches seem in vain
To long and long to hold them back.

And all the summer goes with them,
And all the lovely hope of spring,
For as the tempests scourge their stem,
The bare trees mourn their diadem,
And bow their heads remembering.

Oh ! barren trees, oh ! hearts that weep,
The song-time of your youth recalling,
While in the wind's relentless sweep
The golden leaves you could not keep—
The summer leaves are falling, falling.

—From "*Le Silence des Heures*," by Henry Spiess.

SACRED POEMS.

THE WILDERNESS AND THE SOLITARY PLACE.

Lord, for my sinful pride my moan I make ;
My eyes are wet, my head is bowed and worn.
" Child of My love and wounding, I have borne
The Crown of Agony for thy dear sake
And for thy joy in every bush and brake
I have made white the thorn."

Lord, for my days of idle vanity
I scarce dare lift my hands up to Thy Face.
" Child of My love and wounding, for thy grace
My Hands were nailed upon the Cross. For thee
I bade the swift and tender briony
Star the deserted space."

Lord, for my wandering and my waywardness
I falter lest my feet should go astray.
" Child of My love and wounding, all that day
My Feet were bruised and broken, thine to bless,
So with these flowers that thou mayst stray the less
I have bestrewn thy way."

Lord, for my cold forgetfulness, ah ! see
My heart is broken and I faint for fear.
" Child of My love and wounding, child most dear !
My Heart was pierced thy Hiding Place to be,
And I have brought from It to comfort thee
The sweets of all the year."

“ THE WIND BLOWETH.”

The wind's way, the wind's way !
Coming down the wind's way
I saw a myriad phantoms pass,
The spirits of the meadow grass ;
Little fragile, fluttering things
With their green and delicate wings
Coming down the wind's way.

The wind's way, the wind's way !
Coming down the wind's way
I saw the spirits of the flowers
Floating out to the fields and bowers ;
Every shape and every hue
With wild sweet eyes of heaven's blue
Coming down the wind's way.

The wind's way, the wind's way !
Coming down the wind's way
I saw those ancient dignities,
The spirits of the forest trees,
Each in his order and his kind,
Trailing their splendid robes behind,
Coming down the wind's way.

The wind's way, the wind's way !
Coming down the wind's way,
Where the soul of the world had gone,
There came One, silent and alone,

Whose Visage marred I dared not meet.
I knelt to kiss the wounded Feet
And knew, 'mid love's bewildering,
The dear, dread Master of the Spring
Coming down the Wind's Way.

TO A SAINT.

You go your way serene and calm
And in your hand a burning star,
I follow you from very far,
A glow-worm in my trembling palm.

Yet stoop from your diviner height
Out of your star-illumined way,
For though it casts so small a ray
That which I bear is still the Light.

“ AS LITTLE CHILDREN.”

Why do you blame me that I keep
My child-heart still in older years ?
Too soon we cease to laugh or weep
With the old tender hopes and fears.

Ah ! rather should we joy to find
We have not lost so fair a good,
The straight simplicity of mind
Of which Love said in reverent mood :
“ To such as these in heart are given
The kingdom and the ways of Heaven ! ”

MAY DAY

(1907).

May Day, Mary's Day,
When all should be green and glad ;
But the rain fell fast from the dawning,
Chilly and grey and sad.

Raindrops on Mary's Day—
They were Mary's tears that fell
Over the sick and the sorrowful
And the souls that run towards hell.

May Day, Mary's Day,
Chilly and grey and sad ;
But the sun shone after the noontide
And the world grew warm and glad.

Sunlight on Mary's Day—
'Twas the joy in Mary's eyes
As she thought of her Son, Lord Jesu's love
And the bliss of Paradise.

THE ROBE.

I saw Thy Robe, my God, the other day ;
Over the earth It lay,
A very miracle of light,
Whiter than moon upon a winter night,
Or snow new-fallen on a height,
And yet shot through with every splendid hue,
Gold, green and rose and amethyst and blue
And the deep purple of the distant woods
Where silence broods
Against the soft Spring sky.
And all my heart was one great cry,
One longing just to touch It and so die.
Alas, my hands ! my hands were soiled and
 smeared
With handling of earth's pleasures and I feared,
I feared too much
The Holy Thing——
Sudden I heard a Voice Whose ring
Smote tender, yet with accents of a King :
“ Fear not, O ! my belovèd, kneel and touch ! ”
In sheer delight
I bowed me to Its high commands,
And lo ! my hands
Against that perfect Whiteness were made white.

THE FIRST COMMUNION.

I am a little plate
Which God doth consecrate
To hold the blessed Bread ;
I must keep very white
Lest I should do despite
To Food so dear and dread.

I am a little cup
Wherein God filleth up
The Wine of priceless treasure ;
So I am very still
For fear lest I should spill
Aught of the holy Measure.

MATER DOLOROSA.

Fair and most fair !
With the Child on thy knee,
Look down on me,
And my despair !
Oh, empty arms ! Oh, aching smart !
The little feet pass over my heart.

Star of the sea !
I can see him stand
On the shining sand,
And shout his glee.
And to and fro, as the swallows dart,
The little feet pass over my heart.

Mother of God !
The nights grow chill,
I can hear them still
Down the frozen road ;
On the air they rise, and they fall and start,
The little feet pass over my heart.

“ Oh ! dark despair,
He comes to thee,
The Child from my knee,
Fair and Most Fair.
He shall fill thine arms, He shall heal thy smart,
His piercèd Feet shall rest on thy heart.”

SANCTUARY.

I know a little maid,
Humble and pure of heart,
Who never knew an hour of ease,
But lives another's will to please,
In her still world apart,
Half dumb and all afraid.

She is so frail and slight !
When she nears Paradise
May God's dear Mother, of Her grace,
In some green, lovely, lonely place
Lesson her timid eyes
To meet the Saint's in light !

A DECISION.

I have determined what to do
At morning and at evening too ;
I will find out a song to sing—
Though it be but a little thing,
'Twill serve to hearten up my days,
To tune my pipe and give God praise !

There is the sun and the sunny sward,
And the moon that lights it afterward,
And birds and flowers and winds and brooks,
And children with their pretty looks.
Here's stuff to make a thousand lays,
To tune my pipe and give God praise !

There's beauty in the greyest sky,
And in the wild wind mystery ;
There's magic in the falling rain,
A joy within the heart of pain.
These all shall furnish me with ways
To tune my pipe and give God praise !

So am I settled what to do
At evening and at morning too ;
I'll find some simple song to sing,
Some little fond imagining,
To cheer the dullest of my days,
To tune my pipe and give God praise !

INDEX OF FIRST LINES.

	PAGE
Above the shadow of the western wood	26
A February morning, whose first flush	69
All down the valley	19
Although our lives are set	9
A small white room, whose casement shows.. ..	15
Beautiful, dainty thing	35
Bring me no more	57
Brown sails for toiling	55
Clear against the rainy sky	82
Could I hold, oh ! Love, your white and perfect soul	5
Down here fast fade the lilac bowers	91
Down the woods at Godalming	84
Every night beneath my pillow	29
Fair and most fair !	103
Fear not, dear Heart, to love too much	11
God's Acre marks another stone	4
Green leaves are here	12

	PAGE
He that is a garden's friend	2
Humming wheel, oh ! humming wheel	16
I am a little plate	102
If I had never known you	23
If I must suffer pain	18
If Love would bring me where my lady is	70
If when I stole that kiss	48
I have determined what to do	105
I know a little maid	104
I met my love upon the way	46
In Loversland the skies are blue	76
I saw Thy Robe, my God	101
It's May in the West of England now	61
I, who have lived as if the blessed light	68
King Wanderee has come	60
Last night as I lay on my bed	3
Lend me but dreams	6
Lift up the latch ! Set wide the door !	17
Little feet, little feet	54
Lord ! for my sinful pride	95
Love hid in the rose	81
Love knocked softly at the gate	30
Love met me late upon the way	31
May Day, Mary's Day	100
My heart was like a swallow	56
My lips refuse to take farewell of bliss	72
My little maid, with eyes of blue	33

No one sings the little songs	53
Oh ! cloistered sweetness	22
Oh ! I may walk in Southern ways	59
Oh ! Love, I am too small to stand	10
Oh ! my England, oh ! my England	38
Oh ! perfect voice	7
Oh ! the little maids of Devon	62
Oh ! you may bid the summer wind	44
Peggy, two years old to-day	34
" Sing me a song ! "	36
Slow mounts the moon	78
So as of old the wandering Greek	74
Sometimes when I was near you	14
Sweet, no longer weep nor wail	45
The birds are singing on every tree	32
The leaves of gold, the leaves of death	92
The Lord God planted a garden	1
The moon is large, the heaven fair	89
The moon was like a silver thread	20
The poets and the preachers say	27
There is a garden in a vineyard set	66
There is a land where none are callèd Kings	65
There is no depth so low	28
The shadows lie	83
The wind's way, the wind's way	96

	PAGE
The wind-swept sky is very clear	67
To-day when someone spoke your name	13
Up there in Elland	40
Was it your voice that I heard	25
When Love the flight of Time records	49
When she your best beloved dies	90
When, spirit-like, she moved among	24
Why do you blame me	99
Within these leaves I keep	85
With this pan from toe to head	42
You go your way serene and calm	98
Your arms are close around me	8
You take that road	58

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